United Nations A/66/129

General Assembly

Distr.: General
12 July 2011

Original: English

Sixty-sixth session
Item 28 (b) of the preliminary list*
Social development: social development, including questions related to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family

International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report was prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 64/134 on the proclamation of 2010 as the International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding. The report highlights key activities and initiatives undertaken by Member States, civil society organizations and United Nations entities in support of the year. It also describes the activities and initiatives of Member States against the backdrop of the year, efforts to put a youth agenda on the calendar and national development activities that were undertaken within the context of the year. Recommendations for Member States and the United Nations system in order to sustain and capitalize on the momentum generated during the International Year of Youth are provided in the concluding section of the report.

* A/66/50.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 64/134, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit, to its sixty-sixth session, a report on the activities and initiatives carried out during the International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding. The present report is submitted in response to that request.

2. The report, which provides a comprehensive summary of the activities and initiatives carried out by Governments, civil society organizations, individuals and communities worldwide to support local and international activities marking the International Year of Youth, is based on contributions from Member States,[1] civil society organizations[2] and United Nations entities.[3] The first section of the report provides the background to the year and the following sections provide an overview of the national, regional, and international activities and initiatives undertaken to commemorate it. The report also highlights some of the activities organized by civil society organizations and entities of the United Nations system and sets forth recommendations for Member States and United Nations entities with a view to sustaining and capitalizing on the momentum generated during the year.

II. Background

3. The International Year of Youth was first celebrated by the United Nations in 1985. A decade later, in resolution 50/81, the General Assembly adopted the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, which established a policy framework and guidelines for national action and international support to improve the situation of young people. While this programme is still active, in recent years there has been an even greater recognition that young people are central to the global development agenda. At key international forums such as the General Assembly, the Commission on Social Development, the African Union and the Ibero-American Conferences of Heads of State and Government Member States have reaffirmed that support for the development of youth is an important means for realizing internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. Prior to the declaration of the International Year of Youth, Member States had already promoted several regional and national agendas devoted to young people, for example, the Year of African Youth and the Ibero-American Youth Year (both held in 2008), the Year of Youth in the Russian Federation (2009), and the Decade on African Youth Development (2009-2018) declared by the African Union.

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[1] Austria, China, Indonesia, Jamaica, Jordan, Peru, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago and Uzbekistan.

[2] European Youth Forum, World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, Peace Child International and Restless Development.

[3] Department of Public Information, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Capital Development Fund, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), Alliance of Civilizations, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Volunteers and World Tourism Organization.

4. Building on this momentum, in December 2009, the General Assembly adopted its resolution 64/134 proclaiming the International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding, to commence on 12 August 2010. The proclamation of the year, at the initiative of Tunisia, represented the renewed commitment of Member States to ensuring that young men and women are at the core of the development agenda. At present, there are more than 1.2 billion people worldwide between the ages of 15 and 24, representing some 18 per cent of the world's population. The proclamation of the International Year of Youth has thus presented a strategic opportunity both to raise awareness about the challenges and opportunities facing a very important population group and to advocate for young people's rights.

5. Within this context, the theme of the year, "Dialogue and Mutual Understanding", promoted communication across generations, cultures, religions and civilizations and championed the ideals of peace, respect for human rights and solidarity. Member States, youth organizations, civil society groups and young people were encouraged to celebrate the year by holding activities to showcase the contributions of youth to development, promote mutual understanding and underscore the benefits of their participation in all aspects of society.

III. Activities and initiatives organized by Member States at the national level

A. Contextualizing the initiatives of Member States: the International Year of Youth as background and catalyst

6. International years are customarily celebrated at the national level, and tend to be steered by national committees, usually comprised of appropriate Government entities such as ministries of youth or ministries of education, national youth councils, civil society organizations, representatives of the United Nations system and other relevant stakeholders. Member States were encouraged to hold events in celebration of the International Year of Youth and to review their national youth development policies and programmes. Supporters of the year aimed to utilize it as a catalyst for the fuller implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth, to increase young people's participation in society and to broaden their access to opportunities.

7. In this context, as at 6 July 2011, Member States, civil society groups and United Nations entities have organized 354 events to mark the year, ranging from conferences, forums, camps, exhibitions, competitions (such as sports, writing, photography, art), film screenings, concerts and training workshops, to intergenerational conferences, model United Nations conferences, youth summits, festivals, online and offline courses on youth-related issues and community-service projects.[4] These activities focused on key topics such as the environment, HIV and AIDS and youth participation and empowerment.

8. The support and participation of Member States was noteworthy. The launch of the International Year of Youth on 12 August 2010 was celebrated in all regions.

[4] All events were posted on the International Year of Youth online calendar, maintained by the Programme on Youth run by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (see http://social.un.org/absolutewc/).

In 29 countries, namely, Austria, Armenia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Guyana, India, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Lesotho, Mexico, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, the Philippines, Romania, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda and Zambia, special events were held to mark the launch.

9. Over the course of the year, Member States undertook numerous initiatives to highlight the contribution of young people to society and to address current issues affecting them. Some of these activities are enumerated below, categorized by priority theme and type of initiative.

B. Putting a youth agenda on the calendar

10. The International Year of Youth provided Member States with an opportunity to put youth issues on the calendar. To that end, China proclaimed 2011 as the "European Union-China Year of Youth", with the twofold objective of promoting intercultural dialogue and strengthening mutual understanding and friendship between European and Chinese youth. In Kenya, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports celebrated National Youth Week. In Qatar, the Department of Youth Activities and Events of the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage celebrated International Youth Day under the theme "Dialogue and culture".

C. Forums, conferences, awards and competitions

11. Governments worldwide supported a wide array of youth events that raised the profile of youth issues. In China, celebrations of International Peace Day focused on the theme, "Chinese development for youth and peace". At the World Expo in Shanghai, a youth forum was held on youth, cities and the future, including the involvement of many leading Chinese youth groups. In addition, a large-scale sporting event, "Building bridges for friendship", was organized in Shenzhen.

12. In Indonesia, the Ministry of Youth and Sports led several initiatives. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) University Student Conference, held in Bandung from 21 to 24 March 2010, identified the role of youth in preserving cultural heritage. The Asia-Africa Youth Forum, held in Bandung from 23 to 27 August 2010, constituted a strategic opportunity for young people to raise their voices and promote their ideas on the Millennium Development Goals. The Bandung Games, held in Kuala Lumpur from 29 April to 2 May 2011, was a bilateral youth sports forum that brought together some 800 Indonesian and Malaysian students in friendly competition.

13. In Oman, the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development was organized by the Education Ministry, in cooperation with UNESCO. In Peru, within the context of the International Year of Youth, the National Youth Secretariat held a meeting of youth from 17 different regions to propose strategies for increased youth participation in addressing key issues such as pregnancy and alcohol and drug use among youth, as well as the question of access to education.

14. The Ministry of Sport, Tourism and Youth Policy of the Russian Federation reported on activities organized by youth organizations and civil society for the year, including the international meeting on "The assembly of the generations: the

world of peace and non-violence", as well as a conference entitled, "International and interregional cooperation on youth and the experience of countries in working with teenagers and youth" and the international project, "We are the future of the Commonwealth of Independent States" within the framework of the International Youth Forum.

15. The Youth Division of the Ministry of Social Development in Saint Kitts and Nevis implemented a monthly award for young people for outstanding work in commemoration of the year. In Togo, the first national Youth Forum, held from 18 to 20 April 2011, brought together more than 750 young people from all prefectures in order to encourage dialogue and understanding among youth populations and to increase their participation in decision-making processes.

D. Member State initiatives: putting the International Year of Youth into practice

16. The theme of the year informed the initiatives of several Member States. The National Centre for Youth Development of the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture of Jamaica incorporated the theme of the year into its programmes for 2010. To commemorate the national Youth Month, celebrated each year in November, the Government held activities dedicated to showcasing "dialogue and mutual understanding" as a crucial facet of youth development. The Government of Thailand took various initiatives within the ambit of this theme, including camps and programmes to bring youth from diverse backgrounds together into a common forum for dialogue.

17. The theme of the International Year of Youth was addressed by Member States within their own specific contexts. In post-conflict Sri Lanka, the year provided a key opportunity to promote the ideals of peace, solidarity and harmony among the country's younger generation. As a result, the national activities organized to commemorate the year fed into the country's reconciliation process. In Austria, the theme of dialogue and mutual understanding was explored through various initiatives, inter alia, a symposium organized on 20 September 2010 by the Austrian League for Human Rights, which brought together experts and young people to discuss increasing group-focused hostility affecting all members of society, including youth populations.

18. Some Member States took advantage of the International Year of Youth to reaffirm their commitment to youth development. In Indonesia, the Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs reaffirmed its pledge to develop strong partnerships to increase investment in youth, and to encourage youth-led contributions to society. The Government of Sri Lanka initiated a series of events to renew the country's focus on youth and youth-related issues. Another notable trend was the increased support provided by Governments to youth organizations. For instance, in Austria, as part of the youth policy, financial support was provided to youth organizations, youth initiatives, youth clubs and youth projects.

19. Some countries launched special initiatives in keeping with the International Year of Youth. In Portugal, the Government established a National Monitoring Commission for the International Year of Youth. Under the presidency of the Portuguese Institute for Youth, the Commission is responsible for the coordination of national activities carried out by public institutions and civil society

organizations in relation to the year. The Commission raises awareness, not only about the year, but also about the rights of young people. Its aim is to strengthen youth participation, increase investment related to youth and mainstream the country's youth policies. In Serbia, the Ministry of Youth and Sports inaugurated the "The Youth are the Law" programme to encourage and increase social activism. In addition to marking the year with events, the programme has included several major initiatives: the drafting of the Law on Youth, which has involved the holding of more than 80 round tables, totalling 2,895 participants, most of whom were young people and/or experts in dealing with youth issues; marking of the European Year of Volunteering and the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers in 2011; assistance to young people to carry on dialogue with their peers across the region and throughout the globe; the organization of an international conference on the democratic participation of youth; and the establishment of contact with and the signing of protocols of cooperation between the Governments of Portugal, Slovakia and Ukraine in the field of youth cooperation.

E. Addressing national development in the context of the International Year of Youth

20. The International Year of Youth has spurred Governments to focus on specific youth-related programmes targeting broader national development priorities. According to recent ILO estimates, global youth unemployment of the world's 620 million economically active youth between the ages of 15 and 24 reached a historical peak of 81 million by the end of 2009. In general, young people tend to work longer hours under informal, intermittent and insecure work arrangements, characterized by low productivity, low earnings and reduced social protection. Recognizing the centrality of adequate conditions of youth employment to the development and well-being of youth, Member States have undertaken measures to bolster the conditions of work and opportunities for youth employment. The Government of Togo, for example, has conducted training programmes for unemployed youth and has implemented a national volunteer programme to allow unemployed graduates to gain professional experience. It will also offer professional opportunities to young people through its programme of support for the integration and the development of job opportunities.

21. In some Member States, young people who demonstrated interest in environmental issues were invited to participate actively in advocacy, national adaptation and mitigation actions and international negotiations on climate change. In Trinidad and Tobago, the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs ran programmes on environmental issues. For example, "My Country, My Community, My Space" was a programme that encouraged youth to protect the environment from degradation.

22. Against the backdrop of the International Year of Youth, Member States also led efforts to protect young people against discrimination and developed affirmative action programmes. For instance, three nationwide projects implemented in Austria in 2010 and 2011 focused on young people from immigrant backgrounds, in particular, affirmative action for Muslim women and girls (project "Fatima") and young Muslim men (project "Mustafa"). Another project focused on the training of mentors to carry out these new programmes (project "Heroes"). In Peru, the National Youth Secretariat promoted the creation of a forum for the empowerment of rural, indigenous and Afro-descendent youth to promote the implementation,

monitoring and evaluation of public policies aimed at this segment of society. Peru also initiated programmes for young people between the ages of 18 and 29 who were incarcerated, aimed at improving their quality of life and facilitating their reintegration into society.

23. Member States reported on progress throughout the year in addressing the concerns and widening the opportunities for young people within their countries. In Jordan, the Higher Council for Youth formulated policies regarding the Council's work during the 2010-2015 period, 42 of which focus on youth. A national strategy for youth 2011-2015 has been put in place, and the design of the second phase of the strategy, which commences in early 2011, is already under way. In Uzbekistan, the Forum of Culture and Arts of Uzbekistan Foundation has been working in line with the principles of the year. The Kelajak ovozi (voice of the future) Youth Initiatives Centre, the youth arm of the Forum, was founded in 2006, and has since become the leading Uzbekistan youth organization. The Centre works on themes such as education, culture and arts and information technology, and supports youth organizations. On 12 August 2010, on the International Youth Day, the United Nations Information Centre and UNFPA named the Kelajak ovozi Centre the best youth project.

24. The International Year of Youth gave some Member States an occasion to consider youth issues at the highest levels of Government. On 4 April 2011, the House of Lords of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland held a debate on youth and international development. This debate, the first of its kind in the House of Lords, provided members of the House with the chance to scrutinize the Government's policies for supporting young people in the many challenges that they face, especially in developing countries.

IV. Activities and initiatives organized by inter-State entities at the regional level

25. The African Union[5] has made youth issues a priority. In commemoration of African Youth Day and the International Year of Youth, the African Union and its partners brought together over 300 youth from Ethiopia in a celebration officially opened by the President of the country. At the event, young people advocated increased youth participation in all aspects of African society. At the African Union pre-summit on youth, held from 1 to 9 April 2011 in Addis Ababa, the role of the year in making African youth a high priority on the agenda was recognized.

26. The Summit of the African Union Heads of State and Government took place in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, from 23 June to 1 July 2011. During the Summit, at a debate on "Accelerating youth empowerment for sustainable development", it was noted that the International Year of Youth was a platform for mobilizing African youth to constructive participation.

[5] Input from the African Union was received through UNICEF.

V. Activities and initiatives organized at the international level

27. The International Year of Youth was launched at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 12 August 2010 by the Secretary-General. Statements were made by the Minister of Youth, Sports and Physical Education of Tunisia, Samir Laabidi, the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Benin to the United Nations, Jean-Francis Zinsou, the Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Sha Zukang, the Special Representative to the United Nations and Director of the International Labour Organization Office for the United Nations, Jane Stewart, the Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator of United States Agency for International Development, Michael Yates, the youth representative from Pax Romana, Maya Saoud, and the United Nations Youth Champion, Monique Coleman. In commemoration of the launch of the year, a joint statement was issued by heads of United Nations entities. The Secretary-General, UNESCO, ILO, UN-HABITAT, the World Assembly of Youth and the National Youth Council of Namibia also issued statements for the launch.

28. As a highlight of the International Year of Youth, the General Assembly decided to organize a United Nations high-level meeting on youth, as mandated by the Assembly in resolution 64/134. The high-level meeting is scheduled to take place on 25 and 26 July 2011 in New York at United Nations Headquarters.

29. Other major international events included the fifth World Youth Congress, held in Turkey from 31 July to 12 August 2010, hosted by Peace Child International in partnership with the E-Gençlik Association, the Istanbul Youth Assembly and the Turkish Ministry of Youth and Sports. An offshoot of the fifth Youth Congress was the South Asian Youth Congress under the leadership of the Blue Ribbon Movement, a regional youth conference that has adopted the theme "Peace, dialogue and mutual understanding for the International Year of Youth".

30. The World Youth Conference, organized by the Government of Mexico, was held in Mexico City from 24 to 27 August 2010. The conference was organized by the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs, the Public Education Secretariat and the Mexican Youth Institute, with the support of UNFPA, UNICEF, the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The conference brought together representatives of Governments and civil society organizations to identify youth-related priorities for inclusion in the international development agenda beyond the Millennium Development Goals. The Guanajuato Declaration embodies the outcomes of this conference.[6]

31. Young people's interest in sport provides an entry point for promoting international development goals, such as the Millennium Development Goals, and for communicating values that foster peace and cooperation. In this light, the inaugural Youth Olympic Games in Singapore were held from 14 to 26 August 2010, to inspire youth, both as participants and observers, to embrace, embody and express the Olympic values of excellence, friendship and respect.

[6] Available at: http://www.c-fam.org/docLib/20100908_declaracion_guanajuato_ing-1.pdf.

VI. Activities and initiatives organized by civil society

32. Civil society organizations were major contributors to the success of the International Year of Youth. Countless civil society initiatives associated with a wide spectrum of youth issues were organized in the following countries: Afghanistan, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Australia, Azerbaijan, Barbados, Bahrain, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bermuda, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guyana, India, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Lebanon, Lesotho, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Martinique, Mexico, Mongolia, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Panama, Pakistan, Peru, the Philippines, Portugal, Romania, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, the Syrian Arab Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United Republic of Tanzania, the United States of America, Uzbekistan, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

33. Among global organizations, the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts reported that activities for the year were recommended for action at regional committee meetings and regional conferences in each of the five regions of the Association (African, Arab, Asia-Pacific, Europe and Western Hemisphere regions). To commemorate the year and 100 years of international girl guiding and girl scouting, the Association hosted three consecutive world forums for young women. The aim of the forums was to foster dialogue and mutual understanding, create awareness of issues relevant to girls and young women around the world, mobilize and engage young women from all 145 countries members of the Association in advocacy and connect young delegates from around the world. The Association also produced an advocacy brochure focused on the year, called "Ten million girls … one voice".

34. Among regional umbrella youth organizations, the European Youth Forum marked International Youth Day and the launch of the year with the Belgian Youth Council, within the framework of the Belgian Presidency of the European Union. Under the auspices of the year, the European Youth Forum also partnered the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, the Spanish Government and the Spanish Youth Council in organizing the eleventh edition of the University on Youth and Development, held in Molina, Spain, from 12 to 19 September 2010. The European Youth Forum dedicated a special edition of its magazine, YO! (Youth Opinion), to the United Nations. This special edition was produced in collaboration with UNFPA and focused on the International Year of Youth and youth initiatives at the United Nations.

35. Peace Child International contributed to the theme of the Year by promoting performances of its inter-faith musical, "Peace Child — Alpha Omega" in the United Kingdom, Estonia and Turkey. Peace Child International, along with TakingITGlobal, Global Kids (USA), Young People We Care (Ghana), Be the Change Academy (Kenya), United Games (Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Serbia, Hungary), KULtiger (Germany), Felt Agency (the Netherlands), Blue Ribbon Movement (India), CYCAN (China), ECO-Singapore, Junior Conservancy (Mexico), OASIS (Brazil) and Peace Child (Argentina), all worked throughout the

Year to mobilize youth support for the Earth Summit to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012.

VII. Activities and initiatives organized by United Nations entities

The United Nations Framework Approach for the International Year of Youth

36. The United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development is the global mechanism of cooperation on matters related to youth development within the United Nations system. The Network aims to enhance the effectiveness of the work of the United Nations in youth development at the global, regional and country levels. The Network coordinated the activities for the International Year of Youth through the focal point on youth (also known as the programme on youth) within the Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. At the annual meeting, held at UNESCO headquarters in February 2010, the members of the Network developed the United Nations framework approach for the International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding. The approach set strategic objectives and established the guiding framework for the year: (a) to create awareness: increase commitment and investment in youth, (b) to mobilize and engage: increase youth participation and partnerships, and (c) to connect and build bridges: increase intercultural understanding among youth. The approach will continue to underpin efforts in youth development, including the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth.

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

37. On behalf of the Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development, the focal point on youth within the Division for Social Policy and Development led the efforts to coordinate all activities related to the International Year of Youth. In accordance with both the theme of the year and the objectives set forth in the United Nations framework approach, the focal point creates awareness on youth issues, mobilizes stakeholders into action and expands partnerships with Member States, civil society organizations and United Nations entities, focused on creating a youth-centred global development agenda.

38. The focal point coordinated the launch of the year at United Nations Headquarters, and organized a series of 11 briefings with partners from civil society and the United Nations system, to discuss the major issues concerning youth within the framework of the year. The topics of those briefings included: "Dialogue and Mutual Understanding", "Investing in Youth", "Youth Employment", "Youth and Environment", "Youth and HIV/AIDS", "Youth Participation", "Girls and Young Women: Empowering Disadvantaged Girls and Young Women", "Indigenous Youth Issues", "Youth and Armed Conflict", "Youth and ICT", and "Youth and Education". The briefings were aimed at informing and facilitating dialogue among Member States, as well as between Member States and civil society. The focal point also organized a number of side events, including: "Youth employment in times of crisis", in collaboration with the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations; "Gender representation in youth-produced media", a side event at the Commission on the Status of Women, in collaboration with the Alliance of Civilizations and the International Organization for Migration; "Young people and decent work", a side event held during the International Day for the Eradication of

Poverty; "Youth participation", a side event held at the Commission on Social Development, in collaboration with the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations and youth delegates; "Youth-led social development and young philanthropy", a side event organized in collaboration with the non-governmental organizations, Search for Common Ground; "The two sides of gender: gender equality through youth education", a side event held in collaboration with AXIOS-Misión Mujer during the Commission on the Status of Women; and "Youth participation: guarding the needs of current and future generations", a side event held at the Commission on Sustainable Development, organized in collaboration with the major group for children and youth in preparation for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

39. In order to promote a flow of transparent dialogue with its constituency, the focal point utilizes social media to connect with young people. Monthly consultations on youth issues and concerns have enabled young people from all over the world to express their opinions and inspire each other, regardless of differences. The July 2010 monthly consultation looked at the "many ways that youth could use to promote dialogue and mutual understanding".

40. In order to create deeper connections with its constituency during the International Year of Youth, in collaboration with the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts and the World Organization of the Scout Movement, the focal point developed an "Activities kit: a guide to celebrating the International Year of Youth". The purpose of the kit was to provide young people with practical guidance and concrete examples of how to organize and implement activities on key topics during the year and beyond. Other publications included, "Youth Participation in Development: Summary Guidelines for Development Partners" (produced together with the non-governmental organizations Restless Development); a new 2010 edition of the World Programme of Action for Youth"; an International Year of Youth brochure; "a new 2010 guide to youth delegates to the United Nations"; and *Growing Together: Youth and the Work of the United Nations*.[7]

41. During the course of the year, the focal point also issued a series of fact sheets on "Youth Employment", "Armed Conflict", "Youth and Climate Change", "HIV and Young People", "Girls and Young Women", "Youth and Hunger", "Youth Participation", "Youth and intergenerational partnerships", "Youth as a Smart Investment", "Health of Young People", "Youth and Volunteerism", "Youth: Fostering of Dialogue and Mutual Understanding", "Youth with disabilities", "Regional Overview: Youth in Africa", "Regional Overview: Youth in the Arab Region" and "Regional Overview: Youth in Asia and the Pacific".[8]

42. The Department partnered with the United Nations academic impact to organize a series of e-discussions offering a platform for youth to express opinions on educational issues within the context of the Economic and Social Council high-level segment in Geneva in July 2011.

43. To bring greater visibility to youth issues, actress and youth advocate Monique Coleman was appointed the United Nations "Youth Champion" for the International Year of Youth. In that capacity, Ms. Coleman visited more than 25 countries during the year through partnerships with local governmental agencies, United Nations

[7] Available at: http://social.un.org/youthyear/publications.html.

[8] Available at: http://social.un.org/youthyear/launch.html#fact.

entities and civil society organizations to meet young people, learn about their most pressing concerns and raise awareness about youth issues and achievements at the local, national and global levels.[9]

Department of Public Information

44. The Development Section of the Strategic Communications Division of the Department of Public Information participated in the production of the International Year of Youth brochure and kit and organized the press conference and materials for the appointment of Monique Coleman as United Nations Youth Champion. The global network of United Nations information centres organized numerous outreach activities to raise awareness on the year in collaboration with local partners, including host Governments, the media, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and youth associations. Activities for the year were organized at United Nations information centres in Beirut, Canberra, Dar es Salaam, Dhaka, Geneva, Lagos, Manama, Manila, Maseru, Mexico City, Nairobi, New Delhi, Ouagadougou, Port of Spain, Pretoria, Rio de Janeiro, Tashkent, Tbilisi, Tehran, Tripoli, Vienna, Yangon, Yaoundé and Yerevan. The information centres in Canberra, Bangkok, Bogota, Brussels, Buenos Aires, Dhaka, Jakarta, Lagos, Lima, Manila, Nairobi, New Delhi, Pretoria, Rio de Janeiro and Tokyo assisted in organizing the visit of the United Nations Youth Champion to their respective countries.

45. Multilingual outlets of the News and Media Division of the Department of Public Information covered the International Year of Youth extensively, through online news, radio and television programming, meeting coverage, and social media platforms. The United Nations News Centre and United Nations Radio provided coverage of activities and developments related to the year in all official languages of the Organization. The Web Services Section created a specialized website in Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish.[10] The websites received a total number of 69,812 views between 12 August 2010 and 11 May 2011, based on statistics from Google analytics. The Web Services Section also created the International Youth Day website in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.[10] The Meetings Coverage Section issued a total of 44 press releases (27 in English and 17 in French), covering meetings and press conferences, including the Secretary-General's messages and statements during the year. The Department of Public Information is responsible for communication support during the high-level meeting on youth and for arranging press conferences and liaising with the media on developments related to the meeting.

Economic Commission for Africa

46. The African launch of the International Year of Youth, held in Addis Ababa, on African Youth Day, 1 November 2010, and was jointly organized by ECA and the African Union Commission. The event took the form of a panel discussion between African ambassadors from Togo, Egypt, Tunisia, Equatorial Guinea and Nigeria, and several representatives of African youth. The event increased awareness of the importance and benefits of youth participation in all spheres of African society.

[9] More information available at: http://social.un.org/youthyear/Coleman.html.

[10] See http://www.un.org/events.

47. The ECA Subregional Office for North Africa has planned a joint celebration of the International Year of Youth in the five Maghreb countries (Algeria, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia). The objective of the programme is to empower young people, ensuring that they have a more active role in the development process in the subregion, including in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The celebration includes three activities. In July 2011, a joint publication on "What does it mean to be young in the Maghreb?" will be launched in all five countries. A forum for young leaders to address the theme, "Youth participation and leadership in the Maghreb", will build on existing youth networks and use innovative ways to reach out to a large number of youth.

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

48. During the International Year of Youth, ECLAC expanded its activities under the Ibero-American Plan for Cooperation and Integration of Youth, 2009-2015. One such initiative is the Knowledge System on Ibero-American Youth.[11] The website on the system aims to serve national youth institutions in Ibero-American countries, as well as academic institutions, journalists, youth leaders and the general public. The system was a joint venture between ECLAC and the Ibero-American Youth Organization during 2009-2010. The core of the system comprises a set of youth indicators for the countries of the Ibero-American region, but it also incorporates information from diverse governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

49. The regional launch of the International Year of Youth in the ESCAP region, organized by the Asia-Pacific Interagency Group on Youth (chaired by ESCAP), took place on 18 August 2010. Current youth-related programmes of United Nations entities in the Asia-Pacific region were mapped between November 2010 and March 2011. The mapping focused on the major issues identified under the World Programme of Action for Youth, and recommended potential areas of collaboration. The mapping provided the regional input to a global stock-taking of the capacity of United Nations agencies in youth-focused analytical research, programmes and activities. The Asia-Pacific Interagency Group on Youth has also been reviewing youth policies and experiences in the region for a regional report on national youth policies.

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

50. The twenty-sixth ministerial session of ESCWA adopted the "Guiding Declaration of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia on giving greater attention to Youth Policies: An Opportunity for Development". The Declaration renewed the commitment of Member States to the World Programme of Action for Youth and stressed the importance of developing and implementing human rights-focused national youth policies within that framework.

51. In November 2010, ESCWA organized the Regional Coordination Mechanism for United Nations agencies in the Arab Region at its headquarters in Beirut. The focus of the meeting was "Youth and poverty reduction". The closing statement recommended the development of a working arrangement between youth and the

[11] More information on the system is available from: sicj.cepal.org or www.iberostat.org.

Regional Coordination Mechanism, including the League of Arab States, and the possibility of a shadow "Arab Human Development Report on Youth".

52. ESCWA issued a number of publications, including its *Population and Development Report*, Issue No. 4, "Youth in the ESCWA region: situation analysis and implications for development policies"; and "Youth development in the ESCWA region: statistical profiles, national strategies and success stories".

Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations

53. FAO, in collaboration with other United Nations entities and civil society organizations, has developed a range of educational material on climate change, food security and biodiversity, which includes a series of challenge badges and the International Award for Youth, a self-development programme for young people. The popular FAO "1 billion hungry project"[12] campaign has targeted young people through social media, suggesting ways for them to get involved in the drive to end hunger.

International Labour Organization

54. On the first day of the International Year of Youth, ILO launched its 2010 *Global Employment Trends for Youth* report,[13] which provided global and regional data and analysis of the mounting youth employment challenge. In December 2010, ILO provided technical expertise to the inaugural Global Youth Employment Agenda meeting held in London, which was attended by business, political and civil society leaders. ILO launched a new online platform to share knowledge on youth employment called the Youth Employment Knowledge Sharing Platform.[14] This web-based tool connects youth employment experts and practitioners living in several countries across the globe for the exchange of information, documents and good practices on youth employment. ILO also organized two interregional training workshops in Budapest and Lima in March and April 2011, to share knowledge on youth employment and migration issues. In addition, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and ILO undertook a joint project to review good practices in the promotion of decent rural employment opportunities for youth.

Alliance of Civilizations

55. The Alliance of Civilizations carried out three major initiatives in the context of the International Year of Youth that impacted about 500 youth from at least 110 countries: the Convention of the Global Youth Movement for the Alliance of Civilizations; the PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival on migration and social inclusion; and the Alliance of Civilizations summer school. The Convention of the Global Youth Movement for the Alliance of Civilizations, the youth platform of the Alliance, mobilizes youth organizations to reinforce their commitment to its objectives. From 7 to 9 April 2011, 130 youth from over 80 countries gathered in Baku, Azerbaijan, to work on the adoption of a charter for the initiative as well as on the identification of activities to be included in the action plan for 2011.

[12] More information available at: http://www.1billionhungry.org/.

[13] Report available at: http://www.ilo.org/publns.

[14] More information available from: https://papyrus.ilo.org/YE/YEKSP/acl_users/credentials_cookie_auth/require_login?came_from=https://papyrus.ilo.org/YE/YEKSP/homepage.

Subsequently, the Alliance and leaders of the Global Youth Movement began to implement the decisions made during the first Convention.

56. The PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival on migration and social inclusion, a joint initiative of the Alliance of Civilizations and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), is an annual youth video festival that empowers young people to explore issues of migration, diversity and social inclusion. Over 250 videos from 63 countries were presented at the first two festivals.

57. The Alliance of Civilizations summer school was held at the University of Aveiro, Portugal, from 15 to 21 August 2010. It enabled dialogue and interaction between over 110 youth participants from diverse backgrounds from 44 countries.

United Nations Capital Development Fund

58. The United Nations Capital Development Fund launched YouthStart in December 2010, in collaboration with the MasterCard Foundation, an initiative to increase access to financial services for 200,000 low-income youth in Sub-Saharan Africa. The programme was boosted by a four-year, $12 million contribution from The MasterCard Foundation. With a specific emphasis on savings, YouthStart will identify and support up to 12 financial institutions to pilot sustainable financial services tailored to youth.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme

59. UN-Habitat views young people as effective advocates of change and as catalysts in making a difference on the ground. With this in mind, the 23rd Governing Council of UN-Habitat led major initiatives in line with the International Year of Youth. The 23rd Governing Council adopted a new resolution on urban youth development, encouraging UN-Habitat to lead joint efforts on urban youth issues within the United Nations system, and requesting that United Nations agencies explore the possibility of enhancing the involvement of young people in sustainable urban development. The Urban Youth Research Network and the Global Youth Help Desk were also launched at the 23rd Governing Council of UN-Habitat.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

60. UNESCO served as the Co-Chair of the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development from February 2010 to February 2011, and spearheaded a host of initiatives at the national, regional and international levels during the International Year of Youth. National studies on youth development and civic engagement were developed in the Azerbaijan, Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Lebanon, Russian Federation, and the United Republic of Tanzania. UNESCO supported national policy formulation on youth in Brazil, Jordan, Lebanon, Tokelau and Tuvalu, in cooperation with other United Nations agencies and national and regional partners, developed regional studies on youth civic engagement in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Asia-Pacific region and the Arab States, and completed a study on the situation of youth in the Greater Horn of Africa. Within the framework of the year, Lebanon conducted a project on "Cultural reconciliation for Lebanese youth", and capacity development in peace dialogue for Lebanese and Palestinian high school students. UNESCO also provided educational support for marginalized and vulnerable youth by building capacity through sport (Palestinian Territories), offering grant schemes and scholarships

(Jordan and the Palestinian Territories) and working to map technical and vocational education and training opportunities for youth, particularly for female students, in Gaza. In Egypt, Iraq and Tunisia, and in the Palestinian Territories, UNESCO supported consultations with youth to promote youth civil engagement and participation.

61. Regionally, the fourth UNESCO Asian Youth Forum, held in September 2010 in the Republic of Korea, addressed the theme, "Youth creativity and vision for community in Asia". In July 2011, the National Commission of the Republic of Korea for UNESCO, in cooperation with the UNESCO secretariat, organized the fifth UNESCO Asian Youth Forum, linked to the International Year of Youth. In Latin America and Caribbean, the Forum of Ministers of Social Development (11 and 12 July 2011, San Salvador) focused on the theme, "Social policies for youth in Latin America." In the Arab States, a regional research project on "Entrepreneurship education in the Arab States" was carried out in 2011.

62. UNESCO has proposed the development of a joint follow-up mechanism for key youth events in order to strengthen the accountability and responsibility of both the organizers and the participants of such events and to facilitate partnerships for follow-up. UNESCO assessed the results of 50 global and regional events on youth since 2008, and developed a matrix with common clusters of recommendations, built around the 15 standard areas of the World Programme of Action on Youth and a number of emerging issues identified through these events. The initiative will be presented and discussed at the seventh UNESCO Youth Forum, to be held at UNESCO headquarters in October 2011, where partners and young participants will identify the next steps for collaborative follow-up actions.

Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

63. The secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in collaboration with several United Nations entities, non-governmental organizations and youth organizations, organized a series of activities targeting children and young people during the 2010 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Cancun, Mexico. The conference was hosted by the Government of Mexico between 29 November and 10 December 2010. All of these activities were coordinated with the youth constituency active in the climate change process.

United Nations Population Fund

64. UNFPA collaborated with partners from Governments, civil society and the United Nations system to raise awareness about the issues facing youth in sexual and reproductive health, gender equality and human rights. Along with its partners it used innovative, evidence-based strategies to increase knowledge of sexual and reproductive health among young people, improve access to services and ensure that the issues facing young people, especially adolescent girls, are addressed in national and global policies and development plans. UNFPA supported the creation of a platform for national consultation on issues affecting youth, where youth and key stakeholders could identify solutions, and held youth forums and consultations in Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar, Mongolia, Namibia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Senegal, Tajikistan and Zambia. Sports, art, music, film and theatre events held in Armenia, Georgia, India, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan and Zimbabwe led to the creation of youth centres for people in rural Zimbabwe, a national youth council in Haiti, the

establishment of a non-governmental organization in Georgia, joint peacebuilding activities in Kyrgyzstan and the presentation of policy recommendations to city government officials in the Philippines.

65. UNFPA also supported the regional launch of the International Year of Youth in the Asia-Pacific region and Arab States, and a march in Istanbul, Turkey on the theme, "Our Year, Our Voice: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Matters", which attracted media attention and highlighted the year. UNFPA provided support and training to youth journalists at the World Youth Conference in Mexico and supported several global initiatives on youth using non-traditional media. Finally, in collaboration with the Youth Coalition, UNFPA produced three fact sheets highlighting the linkages between young people's sexual and reproductive rights and the Millennium Development Goals.

United Nations Children's Fund

66. UNICEF undertook a number of advocacy initiatives focused on youth participation at the global level during the Internationat Year of Youth. UNICEF collaborated with the focal point of the Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs on youth to produce a fact sheet on "Youth participation", organized a briefing on "Adolescent and youth participation", and produced a film and a public service announcement on youth participation.

67. At the country-level, UNICEF trained and equipped environmental youth corps in Brazil, Haiti, Fiji and Zambia. In the Plurinational State of Bolivia, youth activities included forums and interviews of candidates for mayor, the participatory development of a plan for the International Year of Youth and the appointment of a team of youth reporters in La Paz municipality. In Guatemala, UNICEF advocated the approval of the national youth law initiative by Congress before September 2011 and also supported a media campaign called "Te Toca" (Your turn!) to build public awareness of issues affecting children and adolescents. In the Middle East and North Africa region, a series of cultural events kicked off the year: in the Syrian Arab Republic, UNICEF launched the year through an advocacy youth project, photo exhibition and cultural event in Damascus; in Lebanon, the celebration of the year was accompanied by the governmental launch of the national youth policy in December 2010.

68. UNICEF has been active in rebuilding efforts in Haiti, supporting the establishment of the National Youth Council of Haiti in March 2011, a platform where 16 youth organizations and networks, spanning all of Haiti's religions, could work together to promote youth dialogue and the strengthening of the development of youth policies. In partnership with the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Civic Action, the Global Movement for Children and others, UNICEF organized youth consultations with 250 young representatives and shared the outcomes of the forum with Government authorities. UNICEF was also instrumental in launching the "Vwajen" blog, the biggest youth hub in Creole where young people could express their ideas.

United Nations Volunteers

69. The United Nations Volunteers programme participated with other United Nations entities in launching events for the International Year of Youth in Honduras,

Mexico, Uruguay and Viet Nam. The programme supported the development of national youth policies in Cambodia and Solomon Islands, and national volunteer policies in Viet Nam and Honduras, highlighting the added-value of volunteerism in developing youth skills and promoting youth participation in the development processes. In June 2011, in collaboration with the European Commission, UNESCO and several civil society partners, the programme organized a global exchange on "Youth volunteerism and non-formal education and the Millennium Development Goals", a joint event for the International Year of Youth and the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers. In 2010-2011, the programme, with the University of Madrid, which mobilized 45 Spanish university volunteers, gave priority to assignments supporting youth programmes and the goals of the year. In commemoration of the year and the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers, the programme published a discussion paper called "Youth volunteering, social integration and decent work: inspiring leadership". The 2011 report of the United Nations Volunteers also focuses on youth and volunteerism for peace and development.

World Tourism Organization

70. The World Tourism Organization published a study in 2008 entitled, "Youth travel matters: understanding the global phenomenon of youth travel", which offers global overview of the youth and student travel industry. Most notably, it sought to highlight how the unique motivations of young travellers make them extremely important to the key objectives of the global tourism agenda.

VIII. Conclusions and recommendations

71. The International Year of Youth successfully underscored the role of youth in the achievement of the global development agenda, in particular the Millennium Development Goals. The activities of Governments, civil society and United Nations entities related to the year brought the youth agenda to prominence. Further efforts are needed, however, to maintain and capitalize upon the momentum generated during the year.

72. **In view of the foregoing, the General Assembly may wish to consider the following recommendations, calling upon Member States:**

(a) **To further strengthen partnerships with and among young people, youth organizations, academia, civil society organizations, the private sector, the media and the United Nations system in order to develop partnerships with youth;**

(b) **To continue promoting a culture of dialogue and mutual understanding among and with youth, as agents of development, social inclusion, tolerance and peace;**

(c) **To undertake measures in partnership with relevant stakeholders to develop a youth-centred global development agenda.**